at will happen to US troops who refuse mandatory COVID-19 vaccines

"Some people will be court-martialed."

BY JEFF SCHOGOL | UPDATED AUG 12, 2021 12:26 AM

NEWS ANALYSIS

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

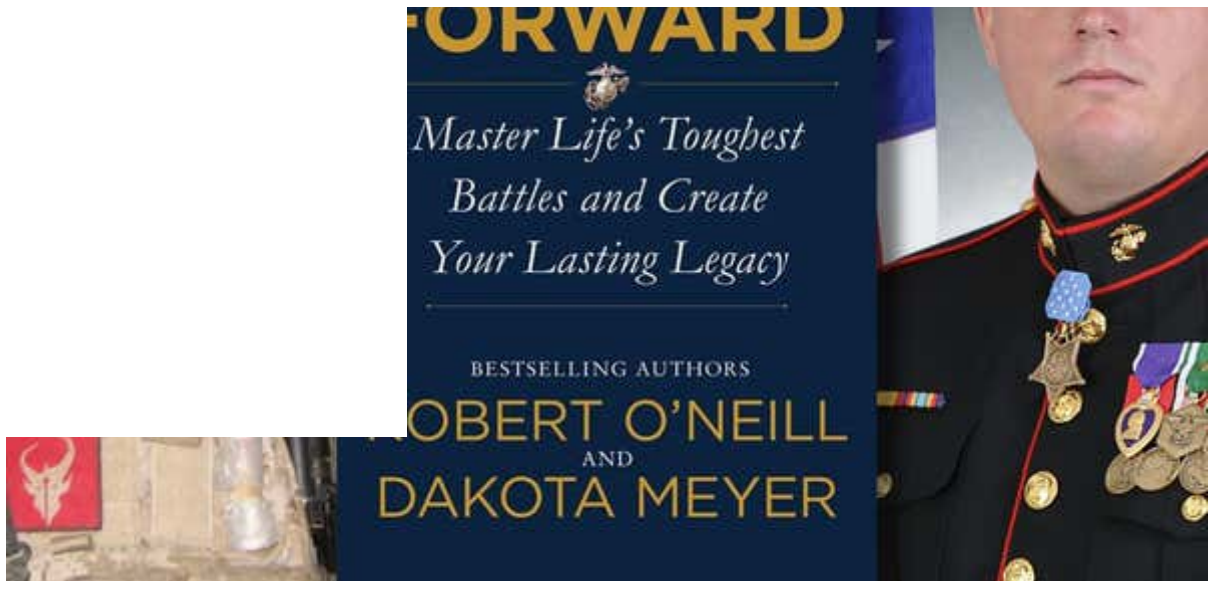
A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

A Norwegian soldier administers the Covid-19 vaccine to a U.S. Soldier at Al Asad Air Base on June 4, 2021. Norwegian Soldiers volunteered to administer COVID-19 vaccinations to U.S. Soldiers, collation Forces and civilian contractors. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Clara Soria-Hernandez).

SHARE

Once vaccines for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) become mandatory, U.S. service members could face a range of punishments including administrative separation and court-martial for refusing to get inoculated, lega

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com



Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin plans to ask President Joe Biden by mid-September for a waiver t would allow the Defense Department to make COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for U.S. troops, but members could be required to be vaccinated sooner than that if the U.S. Food and Drug Adminis fully approves one of the three COVID-19 vaccines within the next few weeks.

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby noted on Tuesday that the FDA could fully approve the vaccine made by Pfizer before mid-September.

"We have every expectation that once the vaccines are made mandatory the troops are going to do the right thing," Kirby told reporters at a Pentagon news conference. "But, without speaking to the future, it's treated, certainly, like any lawful order, and there could be administrative and disciplinary repercussions for failing to obey that order."

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

getting vaccinated, Kirby said.

AIPAC

Take a stand against Rep. Omar

Representative Omar put Israel and the U.S. on the same level as the Taliban and Hamas.

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

"Commanders have a range of tools, short of using the UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] a to them to try to help individuals make the right decisions," Kirby said.

A Marine Medal of and the Navy SEAI Laden are writing

At the moment, it is unclear exactly what punishments troops could face if they refuse to get vaccinated because the military does not yet have a policy for mandatory COVID-19 vaccines, said Anthony Kuhn, a managing partner at the Tully Rinckey law firm.

"There's no directive yet that spells out what commanders have to do," said Kuhn, who is also chair of Tully Rinckey's nationwide military law practice group. "So at this point, it would come down to the discretion of the commander."

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

SHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG 09 2021

PARTMENT OF DEFENSE EMPLOYEES

e

esident Biden asked me to consider how and when we might (COVID-19) vaccines to the list of those required for all st week, I have consulted closely with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Service Chiefs, and medical professionals. I appreciate greatly the advice and counsel they provided.

Based on these consultations and on additional discussions with leaders of the White House COVID Task Force, I want you to know that I will seek the President's approval to make the vaccines mandatory no later than mid-September, or immediately upon the U.S. Food and Drug Agency (FDA) licensure, whichever comes first.

By way of expectation, public reporting suggests the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could achieve full FDA licensure early next month.

The intervening few weeks will be spent preparing for this transition. I have every confidence that Service leadership and your commanders will implement this new vaccination program with professionalism, skill, and compassion. We will have more to say about this as implementation plans are fully developed.

In the meantime, we will comply with the President's direction regarding additional restrictions and requirements for unvaccinated Federal personnel. Those requirements apply to those of you in uniform as well as our civilian and contractor personnel.

We will also be keeping a close eye on infection rates — which are on the rise now due to the Delta variant — and the impact these rates might have on our readiness. I will not hesitate to act sooner or recommend a different course to the President if I feel the need to do so.

To defend this Nation, we need a healthy and ready force. I strongly encourage all DoD military and civilian personnel — as well as contractor personnel — to get vaccinated now and for military Service members to not wait for the mandate.

All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective. They will protect you and your family. They will protect your unit, your ship, and your co-workers. And they will ensure we remain the most lethal and ready force in the world.

Get the shot. Stay healthy. Stay ready.

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Commanders have several options for dealing with troops who refuse mandatory COVID-19 vaccines including issuing them a letter of reprimand or taking other administrative action; using nonjudicial punishment to push them to get vaccinated; referring troops to an administrative separation board for failure to obey an order; or even referring service members to courts-martial, as happened in the past

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

rmine whether or not they want to court-martial the individual,"
nd a lot of resources that are spent on a court-martial, so the

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

Take a stand against Rep. Omar

Representative Omar put Israel and the U.S. on the same level as the Taliban and Hamas.

AIPAC

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

"I would hope that those leaders are stronger leaders and instead of trying to make an example out of somebody that they would actually have some empathy and push the administrative response, but we know that is not always going to be the case," he continued. "Some people will be court-martialed."

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley receives the COVID-19 vaccine.

Attorney Mark Zaid represented several airmen, sailors, and Marines who were court-martialed for refusing to be vaccinated for anthrax. The Defense Department accused them of failing to obey a lawful order under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Troops who refuse mandatory COVID-19 vaccines will likely also face courts-martial for the same offense, said Zaid, who represented Task & Purpose in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit to force the Navy to release emails to and from the USS Theodore Roosevelt's captain during last year's COVID-19 deadly outbreak aboard the aircraft carrier.

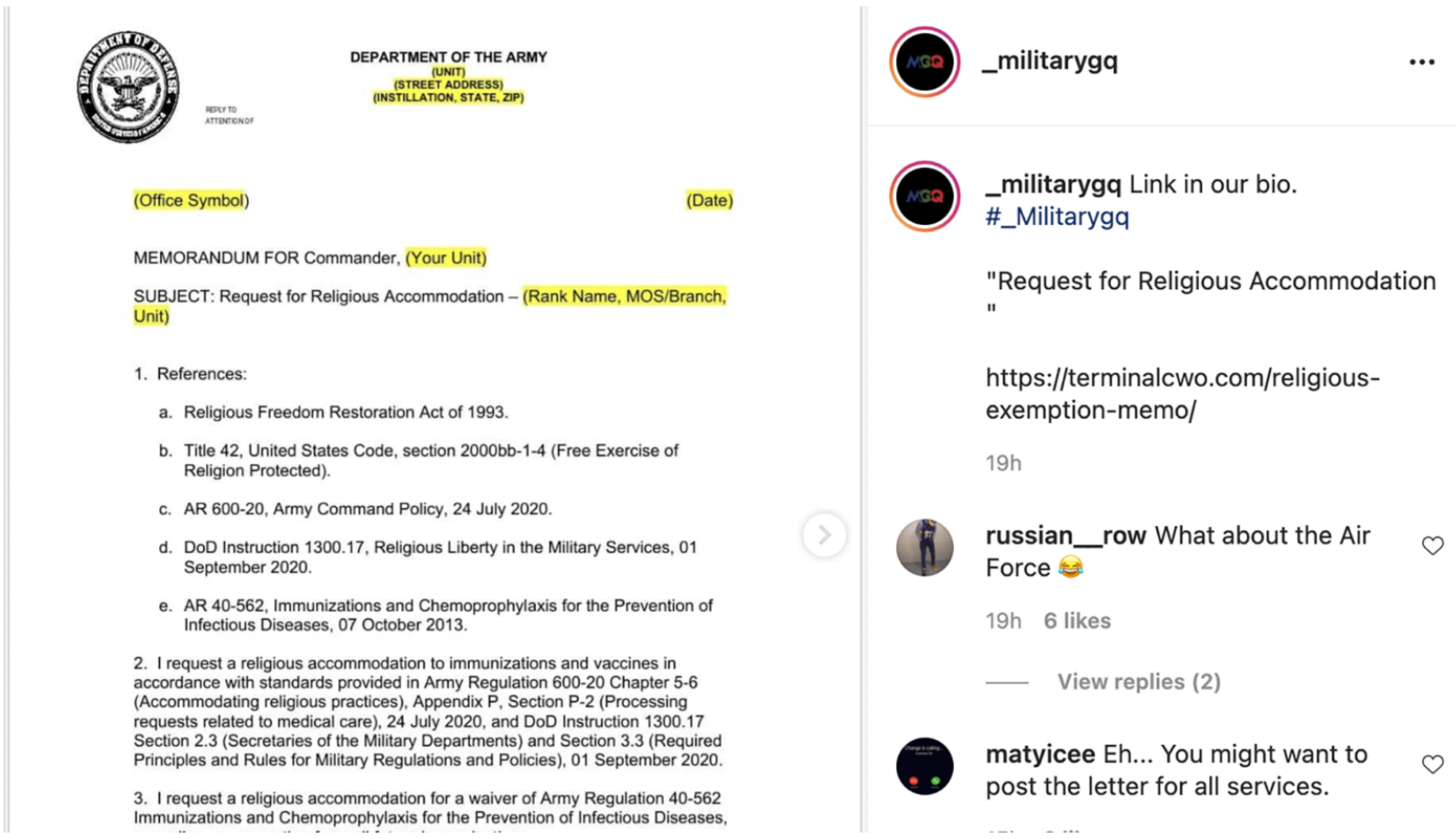
Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

"All avenues of punishment will be available to the different services, to include imprisonment a ending of their military careers," Zaid said. "Unlike with the anthrax vaccine, we're in the midst pandemic so I envision DoD will act swiftly and harshly with legal action against refusers."

Service members who challenge the legality of the military's mandatory COVID-19 vaccination p are almost certain to lose, but the Defense Department will likely recognize a limited number of and religious exemptions, said Butch Bracknell, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel who served advisor for the 1st Marine Division.

A Marine Medal of and the Navy SEAI Laden are writing



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
(UNIT)
(STREET ADDRESS)
(INSTILLATION, STATE, ZIP)

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

(Office Symbol) (Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, (Your Unit)

SUBJECT: Request for Religious Accommodation – (Rank Name, MOS/Branch, Unit)

1. References:

a. Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

b. Title 42, United States Code, section 2000bb-1-4 (Free Exercise of Religion Protected).

c. AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, 24 July 2020.

d. DoD Instruction 1300.17, Religious Liberty in the Military Services, 01 September 2020.

e. AR 40-562, Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases, 07 October 2013.

2. I request a religious accommodation to immunizations and vaccines in accordance with standards provided in Army Regulation 600-20 Chapter 5-6 (Accommodating religious practices), Appendix P, Section P-2 (Processing requests related to medical care), 24 July 2020, and DoD Instruction 1300.17 Section 2.3 (Secretaries of the Military Departments) and Section 3.3 (Required Principles and Rules for Military Regulations and Policies), 01 September 2020.

3. I request a religious accommodation for a waiver of Army Regulation 40-562 Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases,

_militarygq

_militarygq Link in our bio. #_Militarygq

"Request for Religious Accommodation "

https://terminalcwo.com/religious-exemption-memo/

19h

russian__row What about the Air Force 😂

19h 6 likes

View replies (2)

matyicee Eh... You might want to post the letter for all services.

A template form posted on social media showing how soldiers can apply for a religious exemption from getting vaccinated for COVID-19. (Screenshot.)

Some troops may have medical conditions that would prevent them from getting a COVID-19 vaccine, Bracknell said. Those troops could face medical separation because the Defense Department is treating COVID-19 vaccination as a readiness issue.

Take a stand against Rep. Omar

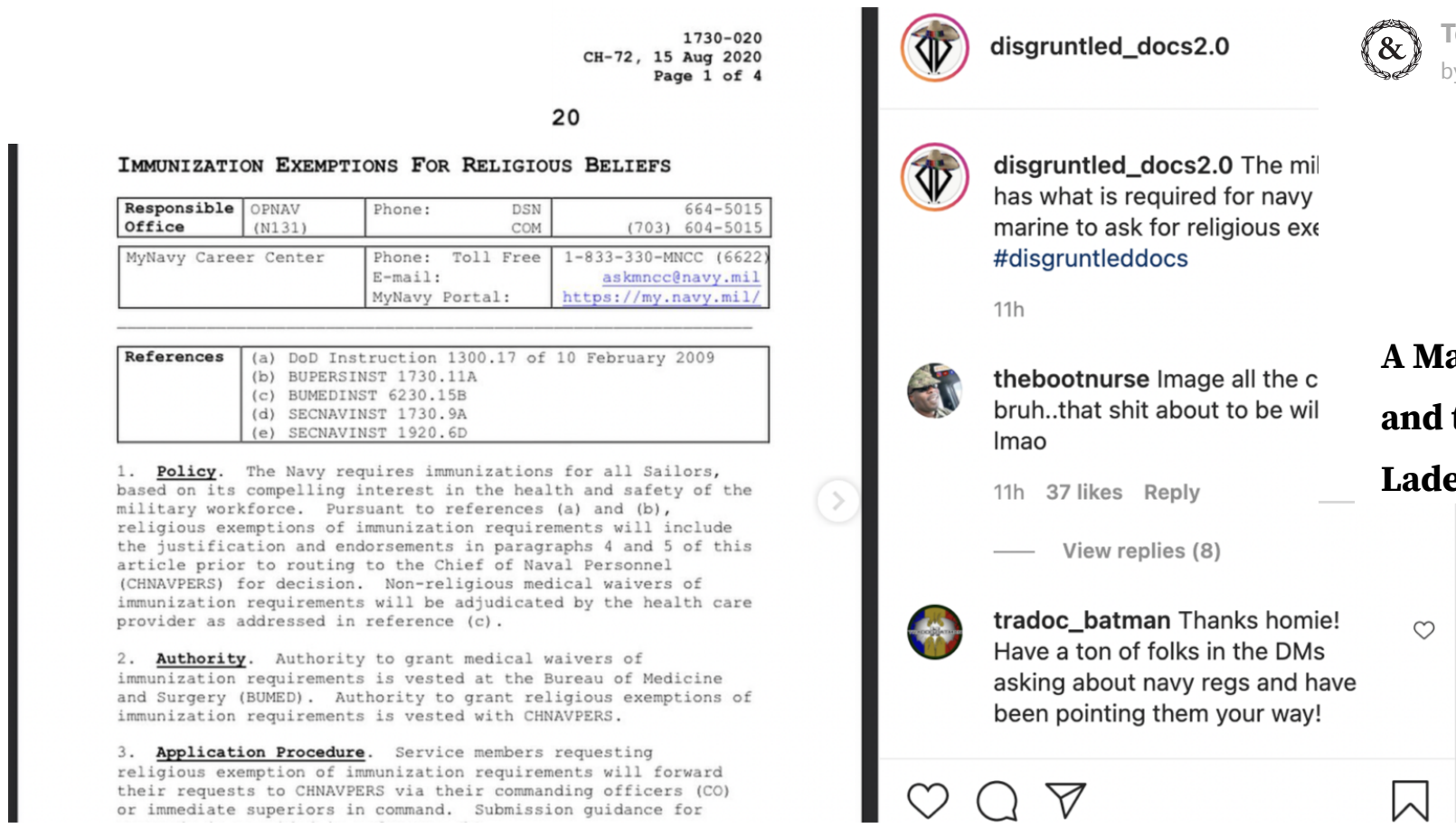
Representative Omar accused the U.S. and Israel of committing crimes against humanity.

AIPAC

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

on from getting a vaccine would have to prove that being closely held beliefs, he said.

al media showing troops how they can apply for a religious of getting vaccinated for COVID-19.



1730-020
CH-72, 15 Aug 2020
Page 1 of 4

20

IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Responsible Office	OPNAV (N131)	Phone: DSN COM	664-5015 (703) 604-5015
MyNavy Career Center		Phone: Toll Free E-mail: MyNavy Portal:	1-833-330-MNCC (6622) askmncc@navy.mil https://my.navy.mil/

References	(a) DoD Instruction 1300.17 of 10 February 2009 (b) BUPERSINST 1730.11A (c) BUMEDINST 6230.15B (d) SECNAVINST 1730.9A (e) SECNAVINST 1920.6D

1. Policy. The Navy requires immunizations for all Sailors, based on its compelling interest in the health and safety of the military workforce. Pursuant to references (a) and (b), religious exemptions of immunization requirements will include the justification and endorsements in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this article prior to routing to the Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS) for decision. Non-religious medical waivers of immunization requirements will be adjudicated by the health care provider as addressed in reference (c).

2. Authority. Authority to grant medical waivers of immunization requirements is vested at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED). Authority to grant religious exemptions of immunization requirements is vested with CHNAVPERS.

3. Application Procedure. Service members requesting religious exemption of immunization requirements will forward their requests to CHNAVPERS via their commanding officers (CO) or immediate superiors in command. Submission guidance for

Service members have been sharing information on social media on how they can apply for a religious exemption to avoid getting vaccinated for COVID-19. (Screenshot.)

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Kirby confirmed that troops will be able to request a religious exemption from getting vaccinated for COVID-19, but they will also have to talk to a military physician to ensure they are making an "informed decision."

"The commander, then, must counsel the individual that non-compliance with immunization may – it may – adversely affect deployability, assignment, or international travel," Kirby said.

While barracks lawyers insist troops can invent a faith that opposes COVID-19 vaccines, Bracknell explained that any request for a religious exemption would go through rigorous scrutiny to determine if the religion in question is legitimate and why a service member's faith is opposed to this particular vaccine.

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

Spc. James Alston, a combat medic assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, holds a d COVID-19 vaccine at the Harrison County Health Department in Gulfport, Miss., Jan. 5, 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

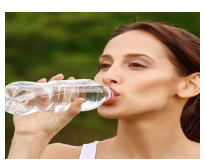
Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

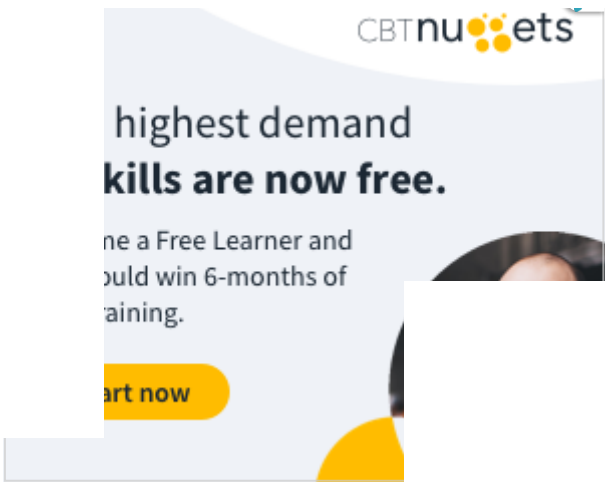
A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Courts will look at the legitimacy of a religion, including whether it has governing texts, a holy book, and a history, he said.

“You can’t make up a religion saying, ‘I am now a worshipper of sunflowers and these are the tenants of my faith,’” Bracknell said. “You just can’t make up some s—t.”

However, the Defense Department has granted religious exemptions in the past for faiths such as Wicca, he said.


Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com



Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

But even troops who argue their religion prohibits them from being vaccinated for COVID-19 wil demonstrate that they have opposed getting other vaccines in the past, Bracknell said.

"Did you also not take the smallpox vaccine?" Bracknell said. "Did you also not take the Hep B? S when you've been opposed to this in the past and how did this all of a sudden become a part of y closely held religious belief. Is it limited to this vaccine? Because if it's limited to this vaccine, th argument, right.

"All those other vaccines are fine, but this vaccine, which is regulatorily indistinguishable from those others – once the FDA approves it, just like the others; or the president grants a waiver, just like the others; it puts it on the same standing as all the other vaccines – show me why this one is different," he continued. "I can't think of a way that they can do that."

More great stories on *Task & Purpose*

- **The Army will court-martial a soldier over a mysterious firefight in Syria**
- **A senior enlisted Air Force leader wrote a typo-riddled letter demanding 'flawless' paperwork**
- **'You either went to war or you didn't' — How deployments divided veterans**
- **This Air Force officer showed courageous restraint by not punching an irate attacker on a D.C. street**
- **A 20-year-old Navy SEAL dropout is charged with starting the USS Bonhomme Richard fire**

Want to write for Task & Purpose? Learn more here and be sure to check out more great stories on our homepage.

Jeff Schogol
is the senior Pentagon reporter for Task & Purpose. He has covered the military for 15 years. You can email him at schogol@taskandpurpose.com, direct message @JeffSchogol on Twitter, or reach him on WhatsApp and Signal at 703-909-6488. Contact the author here.

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

MORE TO READ

RELATED

He was murdered days after starting his Army career. A technicality is keeping him out of Arlington

'No one else should have to do this.'

READ NOW

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAL
Laden are writing

RELATED

'God needed an angel' says gunnery sergeant in moving eulogy for Marine killed in Kabul airport attack

'He was talking to his Marines in a...

RELATED

A Marine Medal of Honor recipient and the Navy SEAL who shot Bin Laden are writing a self-help book

"The Way Forward" is being billed as a...

Conversation 69 Comments

We want Task & Purpose to be a nice place to chat and and swap stories, but please read and follow our guidelines here.

Log In

What do you think?

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

2021

unds a lot like Phil Valentine and many others who in their last dying
ot being vaccinated....I truly hope you don't get the virus or lo
of it. I have, it sucks.

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

Traci Casetta • 16 August, 2021

This is 100% criminal to force a vaccine that does not prevent the virus. Its pointless and the ris are far greater then the virus having 99.8 % survival rate. It's was a rushed vaccine that is still decades away from knowing the long term effects . Already known adverse effects are men anc wome...**See more** *(Edited)*

Reply 4

Oldretired SFdude • 13 August, 2021

Ya know once these vaccines are approved by the FDA, I have no problem with this being made mandatory. But until then, it is an exploratory drug. Using the military as guinea pigs is criminal. If service members are willing to take the "exploratory drug", so be it. But U should not force them. Wh...**See more**

Reply 1

Lucinda White • 19 September, 2021

Replying to Oldretired SFdude

The #'s of deaths and adverse reactions to these vaccines far excedes what is considered safe for any other vaccine in recent history. The ability for the FDA to lower the safety standards for these particular vaccines is disturbing, if not downright sinister.

Reply

Kenneth Young • 17 August, 2021

Replying to Oldretired SFdude

In my opinion, an FDA bureaucrat taking a government supplied pen and signing his/her name on an "approved" stamp means nothing to me.

To this day, the FDA has suppressed the advancement of therapeutics that could treat covid patients. Imagine. 18 months into a pandemic. Vaccines that don't prev...**See more**

Reply 1

1 reply

Justin Perez • 12 August, 2021

Anyone claiming to be a Christian can and should claim religious exemption because of the use of STEM cells in the vaccine. Which is probably the biggest difference in this vaccine versus the ones from the past. Thoughts?

Reply 1

Lori • 29 August, 2021

Replying to Justin Perez

My son had passed immunizations until we uncovered the truth. We did not know that there were fetal stem cells before when we got the vaccines. Now that we know, I am wondering if this could be used as a religious exemption.

Reply

Caesar Flickerman • 23 August, 2021

Replying to Justin Perez

Well, you're not wrong....the USAF just approved a hair waiver for a member who's strong christian values compelled him to grow his hair out.

Reply

Show 1 more

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

A living disgrace to the military, and he is leading it.

• 11 August, 2021

ıce to?

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

John Clevenger • 11 August, 2021

There has been a clear SCOTUS ruling that forcing troops to take an experimental vaccine is ille
How can they do this? This administration blatantly ignore the law and the Constitution!

Reply 3

Paul Szoldra TASK & PURPOSE STAFF • 11 August, 2021

Replying to John Clevenger

Everything is experimental until it receives approval. It hasn't happened yet but FDA approv
expected mid-September. The memo from the Defense Secretary was intended for military
so they could prepare for it. *(Edited)*

Reply

2 replies

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

David Ransom • 11 August, 2021

Full approval will make the issue even more interesting. Reading these articles I'm reminded of reading about mefloquine being given to the troops, when other malaria drugs were available. I also wonder if the government will be denying eligibility for adverse events from the shot. If the COVID19 va...**See more**

Reply

John kowalczyk • 11 August, 2021

All should refuse the shot if they don't believe in it.. use religion as your objective take it all the way to the Supreme Court.make the Biden Harris administration pay for all appeals

Reply 2

Paul Szoldra TASK & PURPOSE STAFF • 11 August, 2021

Replying to John kowalczyk

clearly you didn't read the article

Reply

werw sere • 11 August, 2021

Military members are inoculated with vaccines from their original enlistment through their entire careers, how ever long that is. This is no different, the military is the only line of defense for our country they must be ready to do whatever is necessary when called upon. This is no different. Th...**See more** *(Edited)*

Reply

This comment violated our policy.

werw sere • 23 August, 2021

The FDA just gave full approval for the Pfizer Vaccine, the others will follow shortly. Exactly what qualifications do you have that make such a statement.? None at all, is my guess. The vaccine is safe, so go get vaccinated, if not for yourself then for all the children and immunosuppressed peo...**See more**

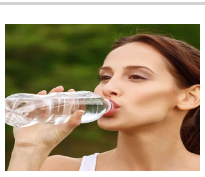
Reply 1

chuck • 12 August, 2021

Replying to werw sere

The vaccines in basic are tried 'n true but even then a refusal can result in release from the contract with NO repercussions 😀

Reply


Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Subscribe to Task & Purpose Today

Get the latest in military news, entertainment and gear in your inbox daily.

JOIN NOW

LINKS

About Task & Purpose Terms and Conditions of Use Privacy Policy Your California Privacy Rights Sitemap

Do Not Sell My Personal Information

FOLLOW US

GOT A TIP?

DISCLAIMER(S)

We are a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for us to earn fees by linking to Amazon.com and affiliated sites.
Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our Terms of Service.

© 2021 Recurrent. All rights reserved.

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com

Top Articles
by Task & Purpose

A Marine Medal of
and the Navy SEAI
Laden are writing

Bottled Water Brands: Ranked from Worst to Best
Livestly
livestly.com